REFORM-ATION TODAY '73

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Carey Family Conference, 1973. Pilgrim Hall, near Uckfield in Sussex. Chairman: David Kingdon who will also be one of the main speakers. His subject: The implications of the doctrines of grace. Martin Holdt of Newcastle, Natal, South Africa, is to preach at the Conference, mainly in the evenings as did Wayne Mack last year. Douglas Jones of Gloucester is to provide teaching from Scripture on the subject of marriage. Sessions for all ages are planned for the mornings. Afternoons are free, when advantage can be taken of the sixty-four acre grounds which include a swimming bath, tennis courts and croquet lawns. The conference commences with the children's tea on Monday, July 30th and ends on Saturday morning, August 4th. All age groups are welcome. The cost, including the new tax, is £13·00 per adult, £8·50 per child (2-11 years), and under 2 years free. Up to 100 people can be accommodated. Early booking is advisable to avoid disappointment. Further details and an application form from: John Rubens (Conference Secretary), c/o 5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

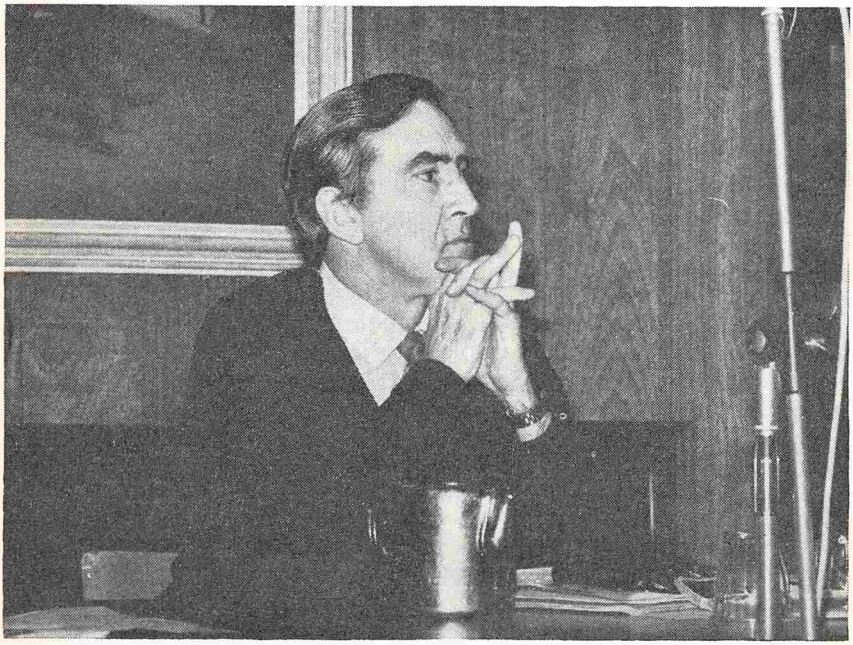
Carey Conference, 1974. Leeds University has now been booked for the next conference. The dates are Tuesday, January 1st—Friday, January 4th. It is almost certain that the conference sessions will deal mainly with practical Church issues, since many feel the urgent need for this area to be far more thoroughly explored.

Evangelical and Reformed Conference, Skoegheim, South Africa. Readers in South Africa please note that the dates printed for the Skoegheim Conference in *Reformation Today*, *No.* 13, were incorrect. We apologise. The correct dates are Monday, July 23rd to Friday, July 27th. As stated in No. 13 the speakers include Jannie du Preez, Alf Nieuwoudt, Clive Tyler, Robin Wells, Jim van Zyl, Erroll Hulse and Herbert Carson who is due to speak at other gatherings as described on page 3, all these plans D.V.

Herbert Carson has been involved, ever since his early days as an Inter-Varsity Fellowship member, in ministry among students. More recently he has been involved in evangelistic missions at University and Collegiate centres such as Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Cheltenham. There has also been ministry to Christian student leaders in Europe and in the U.K. This summer, on his first visit to South Africa, he is due to give a doctrinal series at the Medical Students' Conference to be held at Thaba 'Nchu, Orange Free State, from July 5th-10th. He is booked to be one of the main speakers at the third Evangelical and Reformed Conference at Skoegheim situated about six miles from Port Shepstone, a town on the south coast of Natal about seventy miles south of Durban. Mr. Carson hopes to include a visit to the Bulawayo Baptist Church, Rhodesia, during his visit.

This Editorial is by Herbert Carson.

Towards a Biblical Balance



IF YOU MOVE FAIRLY WIDELY AMONG EVANGELICALS YOU WILL SOON FIND that the doctrinal pendulum swings quite widely—and indeed at times almost violently. One group is very firm in its particular stance while another is governed not so much by biblical principle as by reaction from the others.

The same thing applies to the difference between generations. Again, there is a varying emphasis and often it is the same story of one generation reacting against the attitude of the previous one. Since a theological generation tends to be of shorter duration than an ordinary one it is possible in a normal lifetime to see a series of phases—if not of fads!

One reason for this has already been noted. We are creatures of reaction and in trying to correct an obvious deficiency we are liable to go to the

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Front Cover. When young people respond to invitations and attend a church service for the first time, what do they find? Do they hear an authoritative message from God, relevant, practical, convicting? Is the worship God-centred and enthusiastic? Are the people friendly?

other extreme, and over-emphasise what formerly was ignored. The consequence is a lack of biblical balance and of spiritual perspective.

But if we are to deal properly with a situation in which there are serious defects from a biblical point of view, we must not only watch our tendency to over react, we must also ask why the situation has arisen. Why has some aspect of biblical truth or practice been neglected? Why has there been a serious deficiency in the witness or in the worship of the Church? The answer to these questions is to be found not only in an assessment of a defective church life but also in a positive return to a biblical balance.

Biblical truth is essentially a balanced statement. The Holy Spirit has so providentially ordered the dovetailing of history and prophecy, of psalm and wisdom, of epistle and apocalypse that the end result is a coherent body of revelation. Each aspect is given its right emphasis and the various elements are presented with a due sense of proportion.

It is this basic characteristic of revelation which challenges the pattern of over-emphasis and under-emphasis which lead to so much distortion in our life and testimony. Some stress the importance of right doctrine to such an extent that they end up with a merely intellectual grasp which proves to be as useful as the innumerable odds and ends which collect in the average attic—and only a change of residence deals with both varieties of useless accumulation!

Others, seeing the danger of this, veer off from any serious concern with doctrine. For them it is experience which counts and doctrinal study is an irrelevant extra, and indeed can be harmful. They forget, however, that good health requires not only a thermometer to register bodily warmth, but an adequate diet to sustain it. The imagined glow of a subjectivism which under-estimates doctrine will soon lead to a condition of spiritual malnutrition where the patient is exposed to serious infection by virulent strains of error.

Then again there are those for whom activity is paramount and *service* is the key word. Not for them the patient study of the Word. Nor are they unduly concerned about the necessity of spiritual growth. Opportunity knocks and we must be up and doing. But incessant activity, whether evangelistic or social, will lead to disaster if it is not rooted in sound doctrine and holiness of life. The householder who loves electric gadgets may try to run a great number from the same point. But sooner or later he blows a fuse or sets the house on fire!

Clearly, in the biblical revelation, doctrine is of primary importance. There is a body of truth which is designated "the faith". There is a message which is "the gospel", in contrast with that which is "another gospel". There is such a thing as heresy (Gal. 1: 8). There are such people as false prophets and teachers who should be rejected and with

whom the Scriptures forbid us to co-operate (II John 10). Present day rejection of propositional theology and the current stress on the primacy of experience, both meet the firm opposition of the biblical stress on the truth, which is received by the mind. A healthy church in the New Testament is neither feverishly subjective nor frantically active, for its roots are in the truth—"they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2: 42).

But doctrine must not be divorced from experience. Truth received by the mind is meant to probe the conscience, to stir the heart and to move the will. Application to life is a vital element of theological study and we neglect this at our peril. "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them." We are not to be mere "hearers" of the Word but "doers".

The true student of the Word thus finds that he is not engaged in an arid intellectual exercise. Doctrinal study is not like doing *The Times* crossword—stimulating relaxation but not ultimately of great consequence! It leads, or should lead, to a deeper hatred of sin; a greater passion for holiness; a more intense thirst for God.

Then again doctrine must not be divorced from ethics. The Gospel must be seen to have a bearing on how men live and how they treat their fellow men. An impeccable orthodoxy allied to a callous indifference to others is not only unbiblical, it is a disastrous hindrance to Christian witness. To have clear ideas on the levelling character of both grace and judgment should lead to a new appraisal of our attitude to others. An understanding of common grace is not simply an essential prerequisitive to a grasp of special grace, it should lead us to act towards our fellow men as does our Creator who, "makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5: 45).

Evangelism is another vital factor in the total situation. We are the salt of the earth, arresting corruption, and the light of the world pointing men Godwards. We are called to be witnesses, to shine in the surrounding spiritual darkness as lights in the world. It is surely significant that the church which continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine is the same fellowship of believers who, even in the face of bitter persecution after the death of Stephen, went everywhere preaching the Word.

The brief epistle of Jude has one of the most stirring calls of the New Testament. We are called to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints". But on examining the epistle in detail we find that "the faith" is not only the body of apostolic doctrine, but also involves holiness of life. Belief of doctrine and righteousness go hand in hand. The need today is not for less doctrine. We need a strong emphasis, which is simply a biblical emphasis, on right doctrine. But it is doctrine in the context of holy living; doctrine which deepens the quality of spiritual experience; doctrine which leads to evangelistic and missionary concern.

Pastor Dic Eccles of Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, here presents valuable material on a much neglected subject.

Reformation in Church Order

THERE HAS BEEN, OVER THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS OR SO, AN INCREASINGLY haphazard and lackadaisical approach to the matter of fellowship within the local church. The local church as the body of Christ, a living organism, has been forgotten, and we have seen an atomistic concept take its place. Church members have little idea that they are a part of a whole; they regard themselves as answerable to no-one but themselves; they are, in their own opinion, simply Christians who happen to go to a particular church with a number of other Christians. It is possible that they find opportunities of service within their church but, again, their conception of this is that their work is their own affair.

There are historical reasons for the development of these attitudes, chief among which is the departure of churches from the biblical faith in the middle of the last century. This led evangelicals to opt out of involvement in the churches and, instead, to involve themselves with inter-denominational societies. Inevitably, the standing of the church declined and over the years it has been forgotten that the church is the instrument of God for evangelism and mission and for the growth and encouragement of believers.

The outcome of these developments is manifestly unscriptural and there is a crying need for a return to the scriptural pattern. Reformation is receiving a good deal of attention at the present time and this is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. If there is to be any misgiving, it is that this movement is not yet universal. Scripture teaching must be rediscovered and applied in the churches.

One area sorely in need of reformation is the sphere of *discipline*. Perhaps this is an unfortunate word to use nowadays, since to some it conveys overtones of harshness, rigidity, lovelessness and cold vindictiveness. What is meant by the term is that God has provided a certain order for churches and this order is revealed in Scripture. This order concerns the organisation, government and fellowship of the church. When a believer joins a church he is putting himself into the hands of a body which, through the elders, will minister to his needs, and in everything he will be in subjection to the church. He will be expected to play his part to the full as an organ in the body, so that the body as a whole does not suffer. What happens when there is a disruption of this order, when the peace and

fellowship of the church are violated? The church, according to Scripture, is empowered to act to maintain its order.

Scripture is the authority for belief and practice of the church, no less than for other matters. It declares how the church should be organised and governed and what should be practised. No attempt is made here to prove these statements. They are assumed in this article and what follows is based upon them.

Contrary to popular opinion, a great deal is said on the subject of church discipline in Scripture. An orderly presentation of this teaching is attempted in what follows.

A. The Need for Maintaining Church Order

The need for the local church to control its life and maintain its order follows from the conception of the "gathered church", the "ordered church" and the "voluntary principle".

1. *The Gathered Church.* The church is a fellowship of regenerate people, and the church must receive into membership only those who are believers. The value of this is lost if it is not maintained, and those who turn back on their profession, or who give the elders reason to believe that they are not truly converted, must be removed from the membership. The "gathered church" means a church made up, not of those who once credibly professed to be called out of the world to Christ, but of those who still hold to that profession. (1 Cor 1:2.)

2. *The Ordered Church.* The church stands for the truth of the Gospel and for Christian morality. It exists to bear witness to both in the world and, in order to further this, it has an ordered structure and fellowship. If its standards are violated by a member, action must be taken to restore its order, both for its own purity and for the sake of its witness. (Tit. 2:1-5.)

3. *The Voluntary Principle.*[1] When a person joins a church he does so because he desires to, and not because he is forced against his will. In so doing, he is taking upon himself privileges and responsibilities. These responsibilities include making a full contribution to the life of the church, and living a consistent Christian life at the personal level. Since he has willingly agreed to these, the church is right to act when they are violated. (2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:41.)

4. *Scriptural Warrant.* Examples of the churches in the New Testament maintaining their order in this way are abundant. They cover many different situations, including offences against the peace and fellowship of the church, heresy, sin in the personal life of a member, disputes between members and disputes between churches. (Matt. 18:15-20;

Acts 15:1-33; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 2 Cor. 13:1-2; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11, 12; 1 Tim. 1:20, 5:20; Tit. 1:13, 3:8-11.)

B. The Purpose in Maintaining Church Order

1. *The Preservation of the Spiritual Life of the Church.* The church, in maintaining its order, is acting in self preservation. Its life is spiritual and sin can destroy it. If sin is tolerated in its midst, the whole life of the church suffers and the fellowship is marred. (1 Cor. 5:6; Rev. 2:14-16, 20.)

2. *The Preservation of the Church's Witness.* Sin and error, if they are overlooked, deny the message preached by the church. A telling witness demands consistency. The church acts against sin within itself in order to continue an effective witness. (Tit. 2:1-5.)

3. *The Discouragement of Sin among the Members.* When the members know that the church will take action to maintain its order, they are discouraged from sin. This is heightened if they see discipline being maintained. (1 Tim. 5:20.)

4. *The Restoration of the Offending Member.* The church is acting for the good of the one who has sinned. It is giving proof that it takes a serious view of sin in the Christian. It goes a lot further than this however. The real aim is that the guilty person should be restored to full fellowship in the church. Discipline should not be exercised with a vindictive or arrogant spirit but with Christian love and humility. (2 Tim. 2:24-26; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Rev. 3:19.)

C. The Means of Maintaining Church Order

1. *Maintaining a Regenerate Membership.* It is vitally necessary for the spiritual life of the church that only converted people are admitted into membership. But the church's concern must not end there. That is only the first line of control. The membership is maintained of converted people. Those who show that they are not converted ought to be removed. Mistakes can be made in deciding that a person is converted. The first acceptance should not be final, though in practice it so often is. The important principle that should be accepted is that the church should be made up of those who are converted, and that is not the same thing as those who once satisfied the church that they were converted. This is not to say that the faith and experience of all the members should always be on trial, but rather that those who give positive cause for doubt should be reconsidered. Those who give evidence that they are not converted should be removed from membership, and no others.

Lapsed members would fall into this category, and those who make an open denial of the Faith and of their profession. Except in extremely exceptional circumstances, this should also include those who have moved

away from the district, although time should be given for such to find another church and seek membership there.

Removing a person from membership should never be done without ministering to the person concerned. Unless it is impossible to trace him, it should never be done without his knowledge.

2. *Instruction and Exhortation.* The teaching of the church should include detailed instructions on Christian living and standards of behaviour, on the personal level and within the corporate life of the fellowship. It is not merely the public preaching of the Word that is in view here, but the particular application to the individual in private, through pastoral care.

The private and pastoral side of teaching is also important in cases of departure from the church's standards. When a member is guilty of a fault he should be visited by the elders, reminded of the truth and encouraged to follow it. (Gal. 6:1.)

3. *Censures.* The church also has open to it certain censures which (except in grave cases) should be used only when private exhortation and pastoral care have failed. The censures are made before the whole church met together, and are by the church as a whole.

It needs to be emphasised, that the spirit in which they are given must never be vicious or vindictive. They must be exercised with love and compassion. In all its actions the church must be merciful. (2 Cor. 2:6-8.)

It is essential that the members are aware of the church's position in its control over them. They should be reminded of this from time to time. More important still, it should be made certain that new members, when they join, fully understand this. It will avoid misunderstanding and ill-based indignation, if the two fields not commonly observed today (pastoral exhortation and censure) are specifically explained to prospective members, before they make their final decision to join the church. They cannot take offence at the church's controls and censures, if they knew that this was how the church would respond to unruliness. Besides this, the purpose of the church's control will be defeated if censure is applied with no forewarning.

For the same reasons, this activity of the church must be constant and consistent. It must not be the spasmodic launching of a sudden purge. (1 Tim. 5:20-22.)

The church must be scrupulously fair in the exercise of control. There must be no favourites whose offences are overlooked, and those who are disciplined must not feel they have been singled out. (1 Tim. 5:21.)

D. The Censures of the Church

There are three censures open to the church.

1. *Rebuke and Warning.* A person who is guilty of a fault should be visited by the elders and rebuked privately. (Tit. 1:13.) He should be encouraged to repent and mend his ways.

If, however, he refuses this rebuke, he should be called to a special meeting of the church and rebuked and warned before them all. (1 Tim. 5:20.) The warning consists in pointing out that if he repeats his behaviour he will be brought under the second censure. No other action is taken by the church, but he will be ministered to by the elders.

Situations which would warrant rebuke and warning would include: grumbling; anger; quarrelsomeness; rumour-mongering; heartlessness toward a brother in exposing his weakness or criticising him harshly; indulging in unprofitable matters which disrupt the peace of the church; neglect of church meetings (including business meetings) and neglect of responsibilities to the church.

2. *Suspension.* This censure consists of the withdrawal of the privileges of membership, including partaking of the Lord's Supper, participation in prayer meetings and business meetings. The most important New Testament reference in this connection is 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15. In the operation of this censure the offender is not to be treated as an outsider, but "as a brother". Its purpose is that he may be "ashamed". This censure is maintained until the offender has confessed his sin, righted the wrong and given a credible assurance that he will not continue in the sin. It cannot continue indefinitely, however, and if after encouragement and warning the offender persists in refusing to respond, it may be necessary to bring him under the third censure. (Tit. 3:10.)

Suspension must be accompanied by the ministry of the elders, with a view to restoring him to the full privileges of membership (Gal. 6:1). In certain cases, where an offence is public knowledge (whether this is because the state brings a prosecution, or because of some other reason), it may be necessary for the church to make the fact of its censure public knowledge. Ordinarily, such matters are confidential business and should not be made public, neither should members pass on such information to outsiders. Where such knowledge already exists, however, it will harm the church's witness and, in order to minimise the effects of this, the church's expression of disapproval of the member may be made public knowledge. In cases of serious sin, a token period of suspension may be advisable, even though repentance may have been manifest from the outset.

Situations warranting suspension include: refusal to receive and acknowledge the first censure (2 Cor. 12:21; 13:2); continuing in sin after a public rebuke; deliberate and calculated disruption of the peace

of the church; slander against another member; leaking of confidential church business; false doctrine; grave sin and guilt in state criminal proceedings.

3. *Excommunication.* Excommunication, or putting someone out of church membership, is a very grave action. It should be done only when no doubt of guilt exists and when there is no repentance. It must be preceded by suspension, so that an opportunity for repentance is given.

The Corinthian church was commanded to excommunicate a member (1 Cor. 5:1-5). He was guilty of a particularly offensive, immoral relationship, but it is important to note that this was not the reason for his excommunication. The reasons were that he was open and blatant in it, even to the point of boasting, and that he did not repent. (2 Cor. 12:21; 13:2.) The action the church was to take is described as "delivering to Satan" (cf. 1 Tim. 1:20), which should be understood as delivering to the sphere of Satan's kingdom, *i.e.* outside the church (1 Cor. 5:2, 13; Matt. 18:17). This censure is designed for the guilty man's spiritual welfare and salvation (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

This censure does not preclude the possibility of further action by the church, either in making information available to the authorities that may lead to a state prosecution, or in bringing a private prosecution in the state courts. These kinds of actions will be extremely rare, but circumstances may warrant it, *e.g.* in cases of misappropriation of funds.

Excommunication is not irreversible. A person who has been put out of the church can be received back into membership, provided he or she has repented. The case of Corinth can be cited here. Although there is no absolute proof that the Corinthians followed Paul's command, it seems certain that the incestuous man was excommunicated. I take 2 Cor. 2:6 and 9 to refer to the action taken against him. Note the concern that overwhelming sorrow might destroy the offender (v. 7). Paul mentions forgiveness (v. 10). This clearly opens up the possibility of reinstatement.

Excommunication involves the treating of an offender as an ordinary outsider (Matt. 18:17). If it is right to buy a loaf of bread from an unbeliever, or say "hello" to him when you see him, so it is with an excommunicated member. Love is still to be shown (2 Cor. 2:8). Excommunication does not involve the severing of social contact or banning from public services. This has not always been recognised and actions similar to those of the Taylorite brethren have been practised, down to cutting the dining room table in half. The more extreme group of Mennonites, Flemish Mennonites, practised "shunning" as well as "banning". This applied to husband and wife, parent and child. The Flemish Mennonites insisted it included "bed and board".

E. The Special Place of Officers

The ministry of the church is through the elders. They are responsible for the teaching and encouragement of the members, for the execution of church censures and the pastoral care of the subjects of censures. (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:12; Gal. 6:1.)

The manner of dealing with sin in an elder or a deacon differs from the manner of dealing with other members of the church.

1. *Receiving an Accusation Against an Elder.* An accusation against an elder is more serious than against other members. Elders are more vulnerable than others to accusations. For these reasons, an accusation should be heard in the presence of several witnesses so that every word may be established. (1 Tim. 5:19.)

2. *Sins of Office.* Officers take on themselves responsibilities and if they fail to live up to these they will render themselves liable to the church's censure. Sins of office include: failure to fulfil the duties of office; using privileges for personal gain or selfish prestige and instigating party spirit. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3.)

3. *The Censure of Removal from Office.* An elder or deacon who receives a church censure cannot continue a spiritual ministry, since this depends so much on the confidence the other members have in him. He should automatically become subject to a special additional censure, removal from office. It is likely to be a long time before the church will feel able to reappoint him to a ministry over them.

It may be advisable, while an accusation against an officer is being heard, to suspend him from office until the matter is settled. For this reason such proceedings should not be prolonged, but should be dealt with as speedily as possible.

F. Association Between Churches and the Maintaining of Church Order

1. *The Need for Association.* As in other matters, there is a need in regard to church order for churches to be in fellowship. This needs to extend to agreement on a common practice. Unless this is achieved, churches will be susceptible to troublemakers who move from one to another, leaving behind them a trail of devastation which may take years to repair.

Those who are censured in one church should not be accepted into membership by another. All too frequently what happens is that a member takes offence at being censured, resigns from his church and then applies to another for membership, where he is accepted without any questions being asked. This militates against the spiritual good of the person concerned, leaves the receiving church open to the same trouble as the first, and may cause strained relationships between the two churches.

2. *Transfer of Membership.* A system of recognised procedure of transfer of membership is needed in this situation. A church approached by someone asking for membership and who is resigning his membership from elsewhere, should write to that church and ask for its fellowship in transferring the member. That church should not agree to transfer a member who is under censure, however strong the temptation to be rid of a troublemaker. Details of the person's baptism should be given, and it is of help to the receiving church to be told what service has been rendered by the one transferring membership. In some cases it may also be helpful for the receiving church to be told details of past censures on the transferring member so that the elders in his new church can minister most helpfully to his needs. All this information should be confidential between the elders.

3. *Letters of Introduction.* 2 Cor. 3:1; Rom. 16:1, 2. Letters of introduction and commendation can be given to members who move away, or who go to live in another area for a period of time. Those who do move to a new area should be encouraged to join a church in that area by transfer. It is pointless and unscriptural for them to maintain membership in their original church, since they are playing no part in it, nor enjoying its privileges. Sentimentalism and nostalgia probably play a large part in the desire to keep up old ties, but it is not necessary to maintain a meaningless membership to preserve prayerful interest and fellowship.

G. Church Courts

1. *The Need for Church Courts.* Christians are forbidden to go to law against their brethren (1 Cor. 6:1, 7). There are two alternatives put forward. One is to receive and suffer the wrong done patiently and mercifully and not seek any reprisal (v. 7). This is by far the more preferable. The other is to have the matter decided by a wise man in the church (v. 5). From the style of argument used by Paul, it is to be concluded that this is a minimum, and does not preclude the possibility of several wise men, or elders, making judgment.

2. *The Calling of Church Courts.* Members who find themselves in a situation with a brother which cannot be resolved privately can ask the elders of the church to pass judgment (Matt. 18:15-17). If the injury claimed is proved it may involve the wrongdoer in a censure (v. 17).

In cases where a quarrel between members is disrupting the fellowship of the church, the elders should call for the dispute to be heard before them. It may be necessary to rebuke both parties.

3. *Courts of Churches in Association.* Occasionally disputes may arise between members of different churches. The only way these can be

properly settled is by the churches concerned meeting together, through their appointed representatives (elders), and deciding, in fellowship, what action is needed (Acts 15:1-6).

Differences of opinion between churches should be dealt with in the same way; it is important that they be so, lest the fellowship be adversely affected. They may be brought together by other churches. The only way such disputes can be impartially examined is by churches, other than the parties to the dispute, acting together in association.

H. Dangers in the Maintaining of Church Order

There are several dangers against which churches need to guard.

1. *Heresy Hunting.* There may arise a tendency for some members to regard themselves as snoopers and talebearers. When there are those in the church who pry into the affairs of others, or who are constantly on the lookout for sins and errors, an atmosphere will be created which will be deadening to the brotherly love and trust which should characterise the fellowship.

2. *Assuming a Person Guilty.* Knowing human nature for what it is may lead to a readiness to assume people guilty. Christian love, however, demands that the best is believed about a person until forced to conclude otherwise (1 Cor. 13:6, 7; 6:7). The elders should examine an accusation, to see if there is a case to answer, before it is brought before the church. The accusation must be solidly proved, and unless or until that is done, the member should be assumed to be innocent.

3. *Exploitation.* When there is a procedure for dealing with the faults of members, troublemakers have the ready machinery for bringing false accusations. Charges must be admitted and members censured only when there are two or three witnesses (2 Cor. 13:1).

Where several unproven charges are brought by a member and there is reason to suspect fabrication, the elders should discuss the matter with him and, where appropriate, warn him.

4. *Maladministrations*

(*a*) *Churches Can Make Mistakes.* No church is infallible, and it is possible that a church could wrongly censure a member. It is more likely that mistakes would be made in the administering of church order than in doctrine, since the latter is plainly laid down in Scripture and the former depends on the circumstances peculiar to each individual case. Churches may also be in error in failing to administer censures where they are due (1 Cor. 5:2).

(*b*) *The Importance of Rectifying Mistakes.* Miscarriage of justice may bring the Gospel into disrepute outside the church, or impair the authority of all censures within it. The aim of censures is to edify both the church and the offender, but where they are wrongly applied the effect will be to destroy. For these reasons a church guilty of such a miscarriage should rejoice at having it revealed.

(*c*) *Means of Bringing Mistakes to Notice.* There are different ways in which a church may be brought to realise a mistake has been made. Firstly, it might be by an appeal from the person censured. Secondly, it might be by an approach in fellowship from another church, which may have discovered it from public gossip (1 Cor. 5:1), from reports from a spiritual and respected person within that church (1 Cor. 1:11), or from a direct approach by the censured person seeking membership because his conscience makes him withdraw from his church. This approach by another church is not dictatorship but fellowship in the Gospel. The giving of advice is not interfering with the liberty of a church, but the assisting in the right use of it.

(*d*) *Means of Rectifying Maladministrations.* The church, if it finds a miscarriage of justice has been committed, should, with all the members met together, apologise to the brother concerned, withdraw the censure made on him, destroy all record of it and rejoice in the restoration of a brother.

I. The Way Ahead

Although these practices were usually observed by Baptists and Independents in the past, this is not generally so today. There has been a steady decline in the consideration of the importance of church order since the mid-eighteenth century and this is manifest in the Baptist histories written in recent years, which contain no reference to this subject whatsoever. The situation, however, is changing and there is an increasing realisation that contemporary practice is unscriptural and that there is a need for reformation.

A major problem facing churches today is how to return to biblical practice. After there has been neglect for so long, the problem becomes all the more acute. A radical change is called for and this can involve a big upheaval.

Study of this subject in detail is necessary on the part of the elders of the church. Teaching of the members is imperative, so that all may see the importance of this matter.

A new set of articles for membership may be needed. Full discussion on these matters will need to take place between churches and a common practice agreed in fellowship between them. The increased mobility of people in twentieth century society make this all the more urgent.

References:

[1]This voluntary principle respects the believer's will and subjective experience. God makes the believer free and this freedom is expressed in glad alignment with the church. Seen objectively, that is from the standpoint of a redemptive act, the church is not the same as a worldy society. Having been baptised into Christ the head and into his body the church, the incorporation of the believer is final and eternal. Happily there can (objectively speaking) be no opting out, for we are kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Believers should be taught the true import of baptism. There is no such thing as resigning from the church because we do not like the colour of the curtains or because we have differences or difficulties. This is to deny the momentous nature of our having been ingrafted into Christ. Also we see at this point that infant baptism raises colossal problems. 1. Infants are regarded as ingrafted into the body. 2. As they grow up they show themselves far from having been ingrafted. 3. Eventually they are converted. 4. They now wish to express their regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, but are denied the biblical ordinance on the grounds of an unwarranted sprinkling long ago. Is it right to say they were in, opted out, but are now in again?

Editor.

Bibliography

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Scripture References

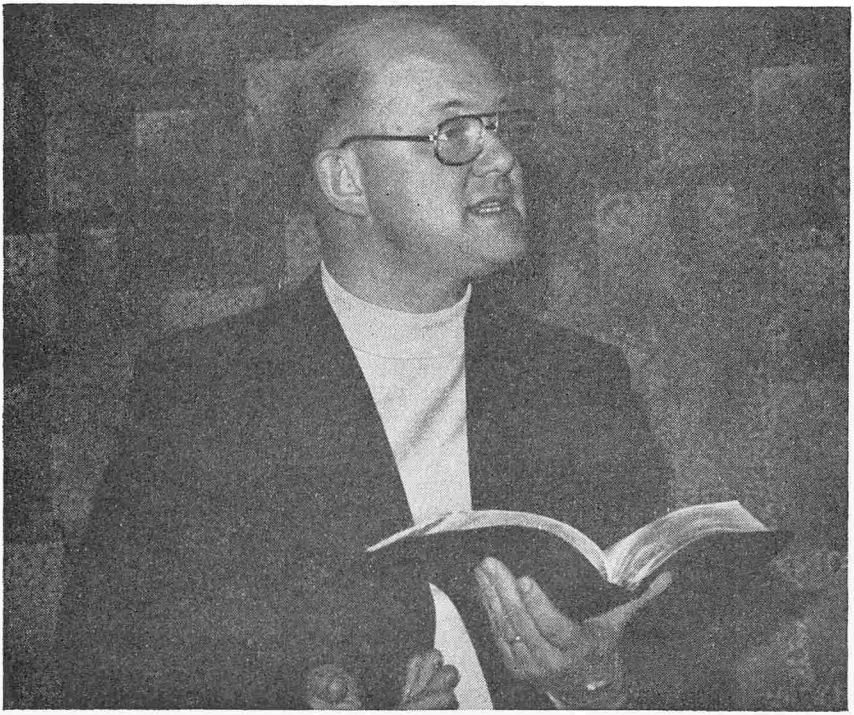
References which bear directly upon the subject of church order are: Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 15:1-6; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-6, 13; 6:1, 5, 7; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; 12:21; 13:1-2; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11-15; 1 Tim. 1:20; 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Tit. 1:13; 3:8-10.

Other References Indirectly Relating to the Subject are:

Acts 2:41, 42, 44; 20:17, 28; 1 Cor. 1:11; 13:6, 7; 2 Cor. 8:5; 1 Thess. 5:12; Tit. 2:1-5; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Rev. 2:5, 14-16, 20; 3:9.

Liverpool

by Wayne A. Mack



J. Berge, pastor of La Bonne Nouvelle Baptist Church, Brussels, during one of his addresses at the Carey Conference.

FROM 9TH-12TH JANUARY, 1973, ABOUT SEVENTY PASTORS AND ELDERS MET for the 3rd Carey Conference at Liverpool University. This conference was convened for Baptist pastors and church leaders who are committed to believing and practising the whole counsel of God's Word.

David Kingdon, Principal of the Irish Baptist College, set the tone for the entire conference with an informative and uplifting paper on the life of William Carey. Carey's statement, "I can plod", and the review of a life that backed up that statement was a rebuke to indolence.

Two papers delivered by Peter Lewis, pastor of a Baptist Church in Nottingham, on "the Puritan in the Pulpit" and "the Puritan in the Pew" were of historical and practical value. The first opened to us a renewed sense of the dignity, necessity and power of biblical preaching. The second directed our attention to the importance of rightly hearing preaching. Such matters as how to prepare to hear the Word, how to behave when hearing, and what to do after hearing God's truth were helpful and needful emphases in this day when men have lazy minds and a craze for comfortable and entertaining religion. We must "receive with meekness the engrafted word" for it alone is able to save our souls. Certainly much of our shoddy living and thinking can be traced either to the improper preaching or hearing of the Word of God.

Much discussion and meditation followed the ministry of Pastor Jean Berge of Brussels, Belgium. He challenged Christian pastors to be concerned about the exploitation, misery, and violence in society. We must become emotionally involved with the woes of humanity, but we must do more than that: we must resist the evil forces that are at work in society, whether those forces are found in communism, capitalism, or liberalism. Drawing from personal experience, Pastor Berge presented his papers with telling effect. Subsequent discussion revealed that, while not all were in full agreement with his basic premises or conclusions, few, if any, left unchallenged.

Opportunity to debate issues of current interest was enjoyed at two afternoon meetings. These discussions were ably chaired by Herbert Carson. Knotty issues were faced, open disagreement was registered, free discussion within the bounds of Scripture was encouraged, and yet a spirit of goodwill and overall unity prevailed.

The writer of this report preached at three consecutive evening meetings on Ephesians 1:3-7. To share the conference in some measure with local churches was profitable and it was no small encouragement to find a clear testimony to the Gospel centrally situated in a great city. I am told that this is far from the position in some of the other large cities of England.

Greatly appreciated were reports given from Sweden, Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Wales, and Cornwall. In addition to this there were opportunities for fellowship, encouragement and counsel between sessions and at the meal table and herein lies much of the value of a conference of this kind which serves to strengthen bonds in the work of planting and watering churches.

How well do we prepare ourselves to hear and benefit from expository preaching? How well do we listen to the preacher? What attention do we afterwards give to retention of the message? The following extract has been taken from the paper "The Puritan in the Pew" read by Peter Lewis at Liverpool.

Reformation in Hearing

JOHN WELLS, IN HIS RARE AND MARVELLOUS QUARTO ENTITLED, *The Practical Sabbatarian*—his only work, and one in which he packed the pious wisdom of a lifetime—sets the tone of his readers' approach to the ordinances: "Having performed . . . our morning exercises in private, how cheerfully should we repair to the public ordinances on this acceptable day of grace and salvation; when Christ sits in state, scattering treasures of grace among the hungry and thirsty souls, who are 'poor in spirit' and wait for spiritual alms . . . (Ps. 84, 42:4) . . . and the prophet Isaiah, speaking of Gospel times, seems to foretell the dispensation of Gospel saints: 'Many people shall go, and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths' (Is. 2, 3)."

Jeremiah Burroughs in his *Gospel Worship* teaches his hearers how to "sanctify the Name of God" in hearing the word preached, by dividing his instruction into two parts. "There must be preparation, and then an answerable behaviour of the soul to this word."

1. The Preparation Necessary

"First," cautions Burroughs, "when you come to hear the word, if you would sanctify God's name, you must prepare your souls for what it is you are going to hear. That is, what you are going to hear is the Word of God . . . therefore you find that the apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, gives them the reason why the Word did them so much good as it did: it was because they did hear it as the Word of God . . . 1 Thess. 2:13."

Samuel Annesley, aware that the limitations, both natural and spiritual of the speaker, might serve as an obstruction to his hearers, for a sermon on *Why we attend upon the ministry of the Word*, declares: "Christ speaks through us as through a cracked trumpet: though we betray our own frailties, yet, for the main of our sermons, we dare say 'Thus saith the Lord', which is proof of Christ speaking in us (2 Cor. 13:3)". If we receive the Word as such, Annesley assures us, "then it will certainly 'work effectually' ".

It is the more necessary to stress this to those in the ministry or those who for reason of long experience and accumulated knowledge think they know much and therefore are tempted to think little of the preacher. Burroughs warns: "For men that are of some understanding and parts (talents), when they come to hear, this temptation is ready to come upon them, that except they hear some new thing that they did not understand before, wherefore should they come? . . . Now this is a great mistake".

Burroughs continues his advice about preparing ourselves to receive the word preached, exhorting his hearers to come to worship with hearts "ploughed up" as he calls it. "Be humbled for your ignorance . . . be humbled for all the sinfulness of your hearts . . . and come with resolution to yield to whatever God shall reveal to be his mind . . . (Job. 32:24, Is. 2:3)". Our writer concludes thus: "Pray beforehand that God would open thine eyes, and open thine heart, and accompany His Word as did David: 'Open mine eyes O Lord, that I may understand the wonders of thy law'. And you know what is said of Lydia: 'The Lord opened her heart to attend to the Word which was spoken'. Now seeing it is an ordinance thou dost expect more food from, than what itself of its own nature is able to convey, thou hadst need to pray: 'O Lord, open mine eyes and open my heart: Lord, my heart naturally is locked up against thy Word, there are such words in my heart, that, except Thou art pleased to put in the key that may fit my heart, it will never open . . . Lord, I have often gone to Thy Word and the key hath stuck in it (my heart), and it hath not opened; but Lord, if thou wouldst but fit it, and turn it with Thine own hand, my heart would open'." "Oh," concludes Burroughs, "come with such a praying heart to the Word and . . . God will be glorified, and you will be profited."

2. Behaviour when Hearing the Word Preached

We come now to consider what, according to Puritan teaching, the Christian's behaviour must be when hearing the Word preached.

"First," says Burroughs, "there must be a careful attention unto the Word", and then he explains the nature of this attention: "You must set your hearts unto it, as Moses in Deut. 32:4, 6: when he said unto the people, 'Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life' ". John Wells observes on this point: "It is said of Christ's auditors that they did hang upon his mouth in hearing him (Lk. 19:43) . . . the ear is the proper door to the heart . . . study then to make it a door to salvation by a serious and diligent attention . . . the ear lies in the way to the soul, as the light shines not into a house but by the window . . . (Rom. 10:17)". Samuel Annesley suggests, as an aid to this: "Mix your hearing with ejaculatory prayer—ejaculations to God, and soliloquize to yourself will help to make and keep the heart right. Jog your own hearts as you do

your sleeping neighbours. Call in your thoughts, while they are within call, and as far as it is possible, think of nothing but what you are about".

Burroughs gives as his second main point in the Christian's behaviour when hearing the Word: "As there must be attending to the Word of God, so there must be an opening of the heart to receive what God speaks to you". In a word, as John Wells puts it, "The heart is the chief guest at every ordinance".

Burroughs gives as his second main point in the Christian's behaviour of his typically familiar and effective similes: "Suppose thou hearest of some sin that it may be thou knowest thou art guilty of. Take the Word, and lay it to thy heart and say 'The Lord hath met with my soul this day, the Lord hath spoken to me, to the end that I may be humbled for this sin' ". Then follows an illustration: "As a man that is asleep, if there be a noise made it will not awake him so soon; but come and call him by his name and say 'John' or 'Thomas', and that will awaken him sooner than a greater noise will; so, when the Word makes a noise when it is delivered only in the general, men take little notice of it, but when the Word comes particularly to the souls of men and doth, as it were, call them by the name, this wakes them".

George Swinnock in his celebrated *Christian Man's Calling* has something of note to say to us on this point: "When the glad tidings of peace are preached, let thine heart leap with hope. Oh, let the nearer approach of the sun call forth and ripen thy fruits of righteousness!—If search be made by reproof for thy beloved sin, so not like Rachel, hide it, neither do thou fret when thy sore is touched, but hold thine arm forth to that knife which should prick thy vein, and let out thy bad blood. Be not angry when a prophet smites thee in the name of the Lord; believe it, he that hates thy sins most, loveth thee best". John Wells sums up the matter comprehensively when he writes: "We are most acceptable, and most truly spiritual in ordinances, when we bring the whole man to them: when the knee doth bend, and the eye doth weep, and the heart doth yield, and the soul doth stoop and the ear incline in holy duties. God's great work was to make the whole world for man; and man's great work in spiritual approaches is to give the world to God—If there be one wheel missing in a watch, it cannot go at all to be an index of time and so in holy duties—those who serve God must give him their hottest love, their highest joy, their strongest faith, their greatest fear, they must act every grace, extend every faculty, improve every part—there must be head work, and hand grace, and heart work in the ordinances".

3. Duties After Hearing the Word Preached

Among many directions Burroughs includes this: "If we will sanctify God's Name in the Word we must hide the Word in our hearts, we must not only hear it, but keep it, preserve it and then do it. Now if I received

a thing that is of great value, if I slight it, and let everybody take it from me, I do not give a testimony to the excellency of that thing; but if I take it and lock it up and keep it under lock and key, I do thereby give a testimony of the esteem that I have of the excellency of that thing—And in Ps. 119:11, there the prophet David professed—'Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee'—and then in 1 John 2:14 'I write unto you young men because you are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the wicked one' . . .". Thomas Senior, in a Cripplegate sermon entitled, *How we may Hear the Word with Profit*, concludes his sermon in a most practical vein as he answers the question "But how shall we keep the Word?"

"1. Repeat it in your families—The Bereans conned (pored) over Paul's sermons, and examined his proofs and allegations: 'They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so' (Acts 17:11).

2. Talk of it as you go from hearing.

3. Pray to the Lord, that he would preserve the Word in your hearts by his Spirit—The Devil would snatch it away from us if there were not a stronger to guard it, and that is the Holy Ghost: 'That good thing which was committed to thee keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us' (2 Tim. 1:14). Pray then after the word as David: 'O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people' (1 Chron. 29:18). And such a prayer, coming from an honest heart shall secure the Word, so that it shall abide with you and it shall come after to your minds: it shall come seasonably in the very nick and stress of exigency, and it shall come with efficacy and power".

George Swinnock presents this point in a delightful way: "I have read a story", he writes, "of two men who, walking together, found a young tree laden with fruit, they both gathered and satisfied themselves at present; one of them took all the remaining fruit and carried it away with him; the other *took the tree*, and planted it in his own ground where it prospered and brought forth fruit every year; so that though the former had more at present, yet this had some when he had none. They who hear the Word and have large memories, and nothing else, may carry away most of the word at present; yet he that possibly can remember little, who carries away the tree, plants the Word in his heart and obeys it in his life, shall have fruit when the other hath none".

If we, who have often arrived without preparation, listened with divided attention and wandering thoughts and left without resolve to retain that which has been good for our souls, take heed to these exhortations, we too shall be more fruitful.

The following introductory outline by the editor[1] is designed to meet the needs of our readers who feel that they lack a knowledge of the different viewpoints. Needless to say that a full examination of what the Scriptures teach on this subject would involve a thesis of great length.

Church and State

The main views of the relationship between the Church, considered as an institution, and civil government, can be summarised under six headings.

1. The Roman Catholic Theory. This has remained fundamentally unchanged since medieval times. The Church and State are seen as being separate bodies. The State "has for its . . . chief object the well-being of this mortal life" and the Church "the everlasting joys of heaven".[2] When there is conflict between the two, the State, as the lower, temporal, human power, must yield to the Church as the higher, spiritual, divine power. Furthermore the State must be ready to uphold the Church and must be guided by the Church in deciding where action is needed to defend the Church.

The Church is essentially an extremely organised society. All born within its pale are "ipso facto" its members, and entitled to all its privileges. They are entitled to its sacraments, not by virtue of their character, but by virtue of their birthright.[3]

The Roman theory is essentially straightforward and, if we grant the basic assumptions, has compelling logic. Where the interests of State and Church conflict or overlap, it is the duty of the State to be subject to the Church.

The idea that the State serves the Church has no New Testament support. Romans 13 mentions several times that the ruler is the minister, or servant of God, but never that he is the servant of the Church. When Paul appealed to the Roman government about the way he was treated, he employed the argument that he was a Roman citizen, not that he was a Christian minister and that the Empire should serve his interests!

The objection that the Church did not exist at that time cannot be accepted. We believe that as soon as local congregations of believers are established the Church is very much in existence!

2. **The Erastian Theory.** Thomas Erastus, a member of the German Reformed Church in the sixteenth century, expressed views which were favourably received in England. His theory was the opposite of that of Rome. According to Erastus, the Church should be subordinate to the State. Erastianism in principle became the accepted doctrine of the Church of England, and still is today. The Thirty-Nine Articles read as follows: "The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England, and her other dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain . . ." Further on we find that "the godly Princes" should rule all estates "committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal". All powers, including the Church, are subject to the State.

This theory is similarly destitute of Scriptural support. Christ, not the Queen, is the Supreme Governor of the Church (Eph. 4:15). The Scottish Covenanters were prepared to die rather than submit to the authority of the monarch over the Church of Jesus Christ. Yet today there is hardly a mention of this slight on the name of Jesus in Anglican circles. It may be objected that the principle is never enforced, but the very fact that it is perpetuated is in conflict with Scripture.

3. **The Lutheran Theory.** Basic to the Lutheran theory is the idea of the two kingdoms. The State functions in the kingdom of the world, the Church in the kingdom of heaven. Luther held that the invisible church of the elect, made visible by the preaching of the Word and sacraments, was not to be under the control of the State. It was purely heavenly. However, ecclesiastical structures (containing a mixture of believers and nominal people) could, and in certain circumstances should, be under State authority. Thus the Lutheran churches accepted a system in Germany by which the religion chosen by the Prince became the legal religion for all his subjects. Those who did not wish to conform had to depart to some other district.

This is illustrated in the case of Sweden where overnight the people became Lutheran. Today 102 per cent of the population is Lutheran! The reason for this anomaly is that many of the non-conformists register twice since it is inconvenient not to be registered as Lutheran.

In Lutheran practice we have a modification of Erastianism but the same objections apply.

4. The Classical Reformed Theory. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this theory gained general acceptance on the continent, particularly Holland, and also among the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians. It is expressed in most of the Reformed confessions. The Belgic Confession, for example, states that the civil magistrate has a duty to "protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all false worship". The Scots Confession (1560): The magistrates are appointed "to maintain true religion and to supress all idolatry and superstitution". The Confession of the English Congregation at Geneva (1556): The task of the government is "the defence of Christ's Church against all idolaters and heretics, as Papists, Anabaptists and such rascals of anti-christ . . .". The Westminster Confession, regarded by some as the greatest Reformed Confession, grants to the magistrate similar rights and powers in matters religious.

This theory is really a modification of the Roman theory. There is one important point in which it differs. It denies that the Church can compel the State; it may only persuade by the preaching of the Word. The main stronghold today of the Classical Reformed theory is among those in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition.

Some Presbyterians today envisage a revival of Reformed doctrine which would revive their cause which has declined. Writing in the *Banner of Truth* magazine (January, 1973) John de Witt looks toward the possible establishment in the U.S.A of a "great national Reformed and Presbyterian Church, loyal to Scripture and the Reformed faith". The American Presbyterians have amended the Westminster Confession in regard to the State. A clause has been inserted which insists that the civil magistrate must not give preference to one denomination above the rest and demands that all ecclesiastical persons whatever should have complete and full liberty.

We do not think it would be a good idea for Baptists to be subject to the original Westminster Confession. It states that one of the duties of the magistrate is "to take order, that—the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed . . .". The expression "to take order" is ambiguous to say the least and who is to define what is heretical and what not?

5. The Anabaptist Theory.[4] At the time of the Reformation the Anabaptists on the continent formulated their views of Church and State. They believed that Church and State should be completely separate. The Church is concerned with spiritual matters and the salvation of the soul. The State is concerned with secular matters and the welfare of the body. The Schleitheim Confession, the most important document of its kind from the Biblical Anabaptists, reads thus: "In the law the

sword was ordained for the punishment of the wicked and for their death, and the same sword is now ordained to be used by the wordly magistrate". Anabaptists held the primacy of the claims of God over government. "We ought to obey God rather than men," they said. They believed that to fulfil office in government one did not need to be a Protestant; a Roman Catholic or non-Christian could perform equally well the function, as did the Romans in the time of Christ. This position offended national Church theologians, who thought in terms of the Christian magistrate.

Most Anabaptists were opposed to the idea of believers performing the function of civil magistrates and almost all of them refused to take an oath. However, they did believe in honouring the magistrate (1 Pet. 2:17) and paying taxes. The Anabaptists were despised at the time of the Reformation, and large numbers of them were slaughtered by the Reformers and the Catholics. It is against this background that they came finally to believe that a Christian could not occupy the office of magistrate. We cannot agree with them in this for a moment, but it is understandable that, when faced with the massive "Christian body" of Church and State, linked in its desire to exterminate religious dissent, the Anabaptists felt that they could have no place in it. In the early days, Anabaptist leaders like Grebel (a friend of Zwingli) and Hubmaier tried by persuasion to affect the State and gain its approval. Had it not been for the persecution, their conclusions might well have been different.

Anabaptists did insist that the State had no right to interfere with the Church. It was here that they had, in 1523, to part company with Zwingli. The latter had taught clearly in his early period the need to be governed by Scripture, but when the civic council of Zurich dictated that the mass should continue to be celebrated, Zwingli abandoned Scripture and bowed to the State. Such was the strong feeling of the Baptists on this score that they referred to the Church clergy as "hirelings of the rulers". They saw the established Church as a "broad, inclusive, lax institution filled with many unrepentant and undisciplined sinners".

Although some Anabaptists became unbalanced in their views we must not allow the extreme or fanatical elements to detract from the truth that the Anabaptists were correct in their insistence on separation of Church and State and in making Romans 13:1-7 their foundation in this debate. On that foundation we would assert today that it is good for believers who have the gifts, to be involved in civil government. Christians are to fulfil all their responsibilities in regard to civil affairs and are to exercise their voting and civil rights. They are to contribute to the defence of their country. Moreover John 18:36, "my kingdom is not of this world" ought not to be used as a pretext to opt out of civil duties in regard to the defence of the State. The Christian ought to pray for rulers and magistrates (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Only in instances where

the State clearly conflicts with the teaching of Scripture are believers to withhold their support.

Today we would disagree with the Anabaptist conviction that it is wrong to swear the civil oath on the grounds of Christ's admonition, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay", and would reject their views in regard to pacifism.[5]

The real issue at stake in Anabaptism was the nature of the Church. The Anabaptists urged the formation of gathered, disciplined churches of believers, separate from the State, and in this respect they were ahead of their times.

6. The Sphere Sovereignty Theory. Abraham Kuyper, in the second half of the nineteenth century, was the first to give clear, theoretical expression to this view, though earlier history is not without traces of a movement of thought that was at least feeling in this direction.[6]

This theory asserts that Church and State each has sovereignty under Christ within its own sphere. Neither has an absolute, or all-embracing authority over human society. The sovereignty of each is limited, both by its immediate subjection to the Word of God and by the limitation of its sovereignty to the sphere appointed by God for it. Yet, within this sphere, each has an unassailable sovereignty that may not be challenged or overridden by any human agency whatsoever.

This theory agrees with the Anabaptist/Voluntary theory in rejecting all idea of an established Church, but it does so on totally different principles. It rejects the idea, not because it holds that the State's concern is secular-temporal and the Church's spiritual-eternal, but because a choice by the State between the various claimants to being *the* Church, worthy of recognition as such by the State, is beyond the competence of the State. It is an ecclesiastical matter lying outside its sphere of sovereignty.

The Anabaptist/Voluntary theory, when it speaks of separation of Church and State really means the separation of *religion* and State. It is the heart of the sphere sovereignty theory that it denies the very possibility of such a separation of religion and State.

The sphere sovereignty theory rejects the division of human life into the secular and sacred, temporal and spiritual areas. Human life is one. In all its aspects and all its relationships, as well as in the individual life, human life is either serving God or serving a God-substitute; it is either bowing before Christ or serving antichrist. There is no middle way. This is as true for the State as for the Church, and as true for the Church as for the State.

The State is concerned with justice; the Church with faith. Broadly, this defines their spheres, but the one sphere is not more nor less spiritual than the other.

The value of Kuyper's teaching is that it points to the sovereignty of God in all spheres and that we should see that all of life, in all its activities is to be holy and glorifying to God. Kuyper's teaching is valuable and exciting, but for these very reasons can be dangerous in the hands of enthusiasts. There is no warrant to exalt either government or culture in such a way as to make these primary and the Gospel secondary which has been the tendency of some disciples of Kuyper and some books published by the Wedge Foundation of Toronto, Canada.[7]

Also, Verduin in his work on the Anabaptists argues that Kuyper never escaped from the idea of the State interfering in matters of faith.

In referring to the possibility of the State actually forcing, or coercing people to believe, Kuyper wrote: "If coercion by the State only worked we would not for one moment hesitate to employ it".[8] Similarly he considered the idea of State suppression of false worship. He writes: "I do not draw back if someone should say, 'Then you desire and purpose that if need require it, idolatry and similar sins should be punished capitally!' If need be, very certainly . . .".[9] Verduin believes that Kuyper was still caught up in the "toils of sacralism". Kuyper's assessment of the conversion of Constantine to Christianity and the subsequent acceptance of Christianity as the nominal religion of the Roman Empire is this: "When the first contest eventuated in this that the emperor bowed to Jesus, then the kingship of Christ began to be triumphant in society . . . This principal victory continued on during the entire course of the long period known as the Middle Ages".[10]

An Historical Perspective

Prior to Pentecost, Church and State were bound together in Scripture in the theocracy of Israel. God was the king. The New Testament Church, however, broke through the boundaries of the Jewish nation, embracing men of all countries. It was not long before it clashed with the State. Religious tolerance was granted under Roman legislation on condition that the supreme Lordship of the Emperor was acknowledged. Jews, perhaps because of their influence, were exempt, and as long as Christianity was regarded as a Jewish sect, Christians were tolerated. When it became apparent that Christianity was a separate religion, born out of Judaism, but distinct from it, the inevitable conflict occurred. Since Christians refused to acknowledge the supreme lordship of the Emperor, Christianity became illegal, and centuries of bitter persecution followed.

When the Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian faith in 314 A.D. the situation changed dramatically. Christianity replaced the emperor cult as the State religion. It was protected and favoured. Soon the Emperor began to dominate and control the Church. This appears to have been accepted as a necessary price for the advantages of State

patronage. With the decline in power of the Roman Empire and the rise in power of the Bishop of Rome, the reverse situation came into being. The Church began to dominate. Several clashes took place, but the outcome was inevitable. What came into being through power struggle was then given justification by Roman scholars as the Christian view of Church and State.

At the Reformation, the Reformers rejected the Roman view. Very few, however, were able to break free from their background on this question, and as we have seen, a diversity of thought has emerged which requires critical analysis, rather than bland acceptance. In this the Scriptures, not tradition, even Reformed or Baptist tradition, must be our guide.

Some Puritans following the Reformers were hostile toward the Baptists. The fourth volume of the five volume set of George Swinnock's writings is largely devoted to an exposition of the place of magistrates. This otherwise excellent work, typical of so many excellent Puritan expositions, is marred by intemperate expressions in regard to Baptists.

Conclusions

It is important for us to see the deadly effects of merging the power of the Word (in the Church) with the sword (in the State). The issue is far from dead in our ecumenical climate. If the State supports the Church today, it supports an ecumenical Church. In some areas where new towns are built, no one is allowed to erect any building for public worship in competition with the ecumenical centre, manned possibly by equally liberal Catholics and Protestants.

Moreover the distinction of Church and State is also important for evangelism. The "Christian" State sees no need for conversions. It is recognised that on this account many Reformers fell short in the area of evangelism. Yoder says: "Evangelism, which for the Constantinian reformers was by definition inconceivable, became a real possibility; alone of all the churches of the Reformation, the Anabaptists considered evangelism as belonging to the essential being of the church".[11]

The State is responsible for the upholding of the principles laid down in the second table of the moral law or ten commandments. By promulgating Scriptural teaching the Church is able to bring light to bear upon the consciences of all men including rulers. Such propagation of truth is urgent today. By it justice can be encouraged to a degree far greater than we imagine. Rulers can in this way be encouraged to maintain laws which uphold the second table of the law but which also encourage Sunday as a day of rest and laws which discourage blasphemy. But it is quite wrong for rulers to coerce men in any way when it comes to spiritual matters or the worship of God.

The issue is relevant in countries like Zaire (formerly Congo). General Mobutu Sese Seko, the President, has issued a decree disbanding 1,300 smaller religious groups. Some of these cults are erratic and the President's problems can be appreciated. At the same time the Church-State issue becomes crucial.

The importance of this subject is seen in countries such as Greece where evangelical believers are bitterly persecuted by the Greek Orthodox Church, which uses the civil law to prevent activity by those outside its system. Finally, in Communist countries the problem is complex, as we all know. Nevertheless every effort should be made to promote teaching which upholds religious liberty and the separation of the realm of civil authority from that spiritual authority exercised within the churches.

[1] I am indebted to Stuart Fowler for the basic outline to this article and for his valuable advice. The subject is one in which believers differ much in interpretation of details. In fundamental doctrines we can aim at victories 10-0. In this subject the score is more likely to be 7-3 or 6-4! For instance, Stuart Fowler and I are in fundamental agreement as to the basic issues of the separation of Church and State, but differ in our opinions as to the value of the contributions made by Abraham Kuyper on the one hand and by the Anabaptists on the other. An interview article would have been ideal, in which distinctions and differences could be more clearly drawn out, but Australia is a long way away!

[2] Papal encyclical "Immortale Dei", Nov. 1, 1885.

[3] cf. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 543, Charles Hodge.

[4] Robert Kreider in his chapter, "The Anabaptists and the State", describes the views held and the sufferings of the Anabaptists in Switzerland. *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, Essays edited by Guy F. Hershberger, 360 pages, Herald Press, U.S.A.

[5] *ibid.*, p. 192. John Howard Yoder expounds the Pacifist view in detail in *The Politics of Jesus*, 260 pages, Eerdmans.

[6] For a modern exposition of this theory see *Church and State in the New Testament*. J. Marcellus Kik (Presbyterian and Reformed). For trends in Roman Catholic thought see *The Church in the World* (Catechetical Guild Educational Society).

[7] cf. Albert F. Gedraitis, *Worship and Politics*, 92 pages, Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1972. Gedraitis is unconvincing mainly because, in my view, he fails in his treatment of Matthew 22:21, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". cf., p. 15 ff. Undoubtedly some of the points raised are thought-provoking but the conclusions spring from over-simplification.

[8] *Ons Program*, p. 325.

[9] *Dictaten Dogmatick, Locus de Magistratu*, p. 420.

[10] L. Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, p. 61.

[11] *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, pp. 97, 98.

In the Beginning

RECENTLY ON BBC, RADIO 4, A PROGRAMME WAS BROADCAST WITH THE title "The Search for a Creator". Listeners were invited to phone in with their questions. These have to be pre-booked. When I phoned in I found that the lines were jammed, which apparently is normally the case. This makes it very difficult to present a serious question.

In this particular programme scientists such as Patrick Moore, the astronomer, were consulted. Of these five were atheist and only one was supposed to be a Christian. His name was Peacock. When he was questioned it was quite clear that he did not believe the Bible to be an inspired book. Rather he simply took what he pleased from it but would not regard it as historically reliable. This so-called expert and so-called Christian agreed entirely with evolution. His grasp of spiritual things was so infantile that when one lady telephoned to say that she was a seeker he said, "If you're searching for God, you've already started to find him".

Programmes of this character help confirm belief by the majority in evolution, and lead most to think that Christians believe evolution. Nothing biblical was presented. Professor John Taylor, a leading mathematician derided religion and went completely unchallenged.

The weakness of the evolutionary hypothesis, however, did emerge. For instance, a French scientist was consulted who declared that it was impossible to believe in evolution on scientific grounds. He did so on the basis that some philosophic explanation must exist somewhere. He firmly rejected Christianity as an explanation.

An inquirer by telephone said that to believe in evolution was as difficult as believing that it was possible for a paper bag full of dust to be thrown into the air and to land on a table in the form a of perfect typewriter. Indeed, he continued, this typewriter would also contain within itself a complete specification of how to make another identical typewriter! It had been shown that the probability of man or the world with all its complexity of detail falling into place by mere chance was actually nil. Yet the scientists sarcastically brushed these points aside. One of them seriously suggested that the universe began with a pin prick! Within this pin prick were such intense heat and pressure that it exploded and what we are seeing today in the universe is the continuation of that explosion! One can only respond to such nonsense by saying that witch doctors in jungles could produce more convincing stories!

The programme not only exposed the barren nature of evolutionary theory but helped show the complete failure of the scientists to explain

the origin of the universe. The colossal arrogance of some scientists was on view. They granted by their own reasoning that they are only accidental specks in the universe. For them no meaning existed and yet they heaped scorn on those of the Faith who have a complete epistomological framework for life and history.

Since the Bible was hardly mentioned, a question I wanted to pose was as follows: "Does not the predestination of all events by God, which is well attested in the Bible, argue God's creation of all matter?" As Christians we accept God's revelation of himself as we find it in Scripture. As we study the Bible we discover that God rules sovereignly, ordaining and controlling all events. Think of Joseph, the prophecies of Isaiah and the book of Daniel. Think too of the life and death of Christ who was crucified according to the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God. All the way through God rules and controls which makes it impossible to believe that he would leave creation to random chance. Nothing has been left to chance. We accept the Genesis account literally and we believe that God, knowing all his works from the beginning, made precise provision for every event in history. It is by faith that we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Hebrew 11:3.

Having said this, we must question the value of participating in this kind of debate. The existence of God the Creator is a matter for assertion not speculation. Debates, on radio or television, are often organised for carnal entertainment. God's wrath rather than his pleasure rests upon them. Such debates generally do much more harm than good. The voice of unbelief drowns the whimpers of those who in an artificial and supine way act the part of faith. These programmes are often a mockery of the truth—a fulfilment of Romans 1:18-25—a means of confirming multitudes in the darkness of unbelief which they prefer to light.

When invited to debate with the philosopher C. E. M. Joad in Oxford University Dr. Lloyd-Jones refused. God, he declared, is to be approached, "with reverence and with godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrew 12:28, 29). Lounging in an armchair, smoking a cigar and debating about God as though he is a philosophic *x* is repugnant. (See his book *Preaching and Preachers*, pages 46-52.)

This is not to say that there may not be a place for the answering of questions as did Christ in his ministry. On many occasions, such as that recorded in John, Chapter 8, he answered the cavils of the Pharisees on points of doctrine. However, the setting was somewhat different from that found in a radio or television studio where programmes are often rigged and dominated by atheists. There are opportunities to be used. Paul proclaimed the Gospel at Mars Hill. But in due course Paul left the mockers to their mocking. (Acts 17:32, 33.) *Editor.*

The Carey Conference, The Carey Recording Studios, Carey Publications—why Carey? In Carey we see missionary zeal springing from a grasp of Biblical truth. It is not evangelism at the expense of truth but evangelism because of the truth that we aim at. In this, the first half of a study given at Liverpool, David Kingdon sets the background to the life of Carey.

William Carey and the rise of the Modern Missionary Movement

WILLIAM CAREY HAS OFTEN BEEN DESCRIBED AS "THE FATHER OF MODERN missions". But he was not the first Protestant missionary to go to India, nor was the Baptist Missionary Society which he helped to found in 1792 the first Protestant missionary organisation. Yet, in a sense that is deeper than the mere marking of a date in history, Carey is "the father of modern missions", for in Kenneth Scott Latourette's words he "marks the beginning in British and American Protestantism of an enterprise which planned in terms of the globe".[1] How important a part these have played in the history of missions may be gauged from the fact that "it has been the English-speaking world which has provided four-fifths of the non-Roman missionaries from the days of Carey until the present time".[2]

The dominant role played by English-speaking peoples in the spreading of the Gospel in the nineteenth century, which is "pre-eminently the European century in world history"[3] was not fortuitous. It was, we believe, the result of God's ordering of history. Looking back we can see that, as in the day of the Saviour's advent, there was about the last years of the eighteenth and the first of the nineteenth centuries "the fulness of the time", the divinely ordained moment for the radically new to operate in the seemingly changeless history of the foregoing years.

Europe had been weak for generations, racked by the wars of religion in the seventeenth century and by the conflicts of the Austrian and Spanish Successions in the eighteenth, but, as Stephen Neill points out, two great

changes made possible the beginning of a new era. The first change was psychological, the second scientific and economic.

The psychological change came about when it was realised that the countries in which European powers had obtained a foothold for trading purposes could be conquered and formed into an empire. The Frenchman, Joseph Francois Dupleix (1697-1763) was the first to see the weakness which lay behind the still splendid facade of the Indian Kingdoms. He resolved that, when the Mogul empire collapsed, France would erect upon its ruins an empire of her own, but by one of history's strange ironies it was Clive and the British who gave his dream reality. Thus the colonial era was born, with profound consequences for the preaching of the Gospel in foreign parts.

The Industrial Revolution brought about a tremendous disparity between Europe and Asia, which the post-Second World War industrial and technological revolution in Japan and the Far East is only now beginning to redress. The use of steam and electricity shrank the world in terms of the speed at which distances could be covered. The Industrial Revolution itself demanded the acquisition of new resources, and the opening up of new sources of food to provide for the multiplying population of Western Europe.

The new, aggressive spirit visible in Western Europe found expression in a passion for exploration. The voyages of Captain Cook described in his *Journals* opened up new horizons, not least for a poor cobbler, William Carey, in rural Northamptonshire. Even if exploration was followed or accompanied by exploitation, a slumbering Church began to awaken to the existence of peoples whom she had either neglected for centuries or did not know so much as lived.

It is in this context that we must set the rise of the modern missionary movement. Looking back with the advantage of what is now a long perspective, we can see that the Anglo-Saxon missionary advance of the nineteenth century was part of a much wider movement of the West to the East. This is not to admit, however, that Christian missions were but an aspect of colonialism, and nothing else. Though often there was too close an identification of Christianity and commerce, there was also very frequently a clash between the commercial objectives of traders and governments and the spiritual aims of the missionaries. In Carey's case, the British East India Company often proved his greatest hindrance.

In attempting an assessment of Carey's place in the rise of the modern missionary movement, it is not sufficient to focus attention on the general historical background. We must look more closely at the changes which were taking place in the attitudes of Christians, and especially at those occurring within Carey's own Particular Baptist denomination, for, much more important, in his case, than the Industrial Revolution was what we can only call a theological revolution.

The Background to Advance

Some attention should be devoted to this, since normally it is not treated in sufficient depth, or is ignored altogether.

Recent works have drawn attention to the importance of *the eschatological hope* in the story of the rise of modern missions.[4]

Broadly speaking, the Reformation was viewed by the Puritans as a mighty act of God which presaged the complete overthrow of anti-Christ and the spreading of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world "as the waters cover the sea". J. A. De Jong defines the millennial expectations operative in the rise of modern missions thus, "These expectations include such anticipations as the conversion of the Gentile nations, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of the Roman Catholic establishment, and an era of glory for the church when the Gospel will triumph among all nations".[5]

A key figure, so far as our story is concerned, is Richard Sibbes. He profoundly influenced John Eliot (1604-90), who in turn influenced William Carey. Preaching at Cambridge he exhorted the townsmen and gownsmen not to despair of the conversion of the heathen.

"How bad soever they be, they are of the world, and if the Gospel be preached to them, Christ will be 'believed on in the world'. Christ's almighty power goeth with his own ordinance to make it effectual . . . And when the fulness of the gentiles is come in, then comes the conversion of the Jews. Why may we not expect it? They were the people of God. We see Christ believed on in the world. We may therefore expect that they shall also be called, there being many of them, and keeping the nation distinct from others."[6]

Sibbes' confidence in the ability of the exalted Christ in glory to bring nations to his feet deeply impressed John Eliot, the best known of the missionaries to the North American Indians. Eliot left England in 1631 to minister to English settlers. When more than forty he began to study Algonquin, the language of the Indians of Massachusetts. His biography, written by Cotton Mather, was to have a very considerable influence.

Eliot, in the words of De Jong, "saw his work in the context of the spread of Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth. It stood at the beginning of the glorious harvest day and was a first step toward realising the fulness of that day".[7] Though he laboured in a "day of small things" he was confident that the harvest prophesied in Scripture would be reaped: ". . . the Gospel shall spread over all the Earth, even to the ends of the Earth; and from the rising to the setting Sun; all Nations shall become the Nations and Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ".[8]

The same hope breathes through the Journal of another notable missionary to the North American Indians, David Brainerd. Like the biography of

Eliot the *Life and Death of the Rev. David Brainerd*, edited and published by Jonathan Edwards in 1749, was an important factor in Carey's going to India. In Brainerd intense prayer combined with fervent eschatological hope, as may be appreciated in the following extract:[9]

> Monday, 19th April, 1742
>
> "In the forenoon I felt the power of intercession for precious, immortal souls; for the advancement of the Kingdom of my dear Lord and Saviour in the word (surely world); and withal, a most sweet resignation, and even consolation and joy in the thoughts of suffering hardships, distresses, and even death itself, in the promotion of it; and had special enlargement in pleading for the enlightment and conversion of the poor heathen."

The preaching and writings of Jonathan Edwards (1705-58) were another important factor in nourishing the burning hope of Christ's world-wide reign, which was to motivate and sustain so much later Protestant missionary activity. In 1739 Edwards preached a series of thirty-nine sermons under the general title of *A History of the Work of Redemption.* This was not published until 1774, some sixteen years after his death. As De Jong points out, the sermons are of particular significance because they specifically link revival with the promised latter-day glory. Through a revived church the heathen will be converted.

"There will be a wonderful spirit of pity towards them, and zeal for their instruction and conversion put into multitudes, and many shall go forth and carry the Gospel unto them. Then shall the joyful sound be heard among them, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise with his glorious light shining on those vast regions of the earth that have been covered with Heathenish darkness for many thousand years."[10] Citing Genesis 12:3; Haggai 2:7; Isaiah 11:9; 65:22 and Daniel 7:27, Edwards asserted that Christ's undisputed rule would be world-wide.

In his tract *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer* (1746) Edwards linked communal prayer for revival with the dawning of the latter-day glory. ". . . It is the expressly revealed will of God, that his church should be very much in prayer for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit, which is to be in the latter days, and for what shall be accomplished by it."[11] He drew particular attention to Ezekiel 36 with its promise of cleansing and renewal, and especially to verse 37, "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them". He commented thus: "Which doubtless implies it is the will of God, that extraordinary prayerfulness in his people for this mercy should precede the bestowment of it".[12]

The influence of Edwards' theology in general, and his tract in particular, on the British scene may be gauged by the following facts. In April, 1784,

the Rev. John Erskine, a Scottish Presbyterian minister who had prepared the first British edition of Edwards' *History of the Work of Redemption*, sent to the Rev. John Ryland, the pastor of the Baptist Church at College Street, Northampton, a parcel of books, among which was Edwards' *An Humble Attempt*. Ryland handed this to John Sutcliff, the pastor of the Baptist church at Olney, Bucks. Several weeks later, at Sutcliff's instigation, the Northamptonshire association, to which they both belonged, resolved to set apart the first Monday of every month to concerts (or agreements) for prayer for a reviving work of the Spirit and the spread of Christ's kingdom. The circular letter which the association leaders sent out strikes the universal note which was such a marked feature of Edwards' theology: "Let the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered, and the spread of the Gospel to the distant parts of the habitable globe be the object of your most fervent requests".[13] How pervasive the influence of both Brainerd and Edwards was on the Northamptonshire circle of ministers may be seen from the fact that Ryland named his sons Jonathan Edwards Ryland and David Brainerd Ryland.[14] Ryland recorded that Edwards' life and diary of Brainerd became, as he put it, virtually a "second Bible" for Carey.[15]

If the eschatological hope of a world-wide dominion of Christ, through the spreading of the Gospel, formed an important element in the theological revolution which resulted in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, so also did a new awareness of the continuing relevance of the Great Commission for the Church's mission in all ages.

At the time of the Reformation only the despised Anabaptists had come to see that the Great Commission was of permanent validity in the life of the church. Calvin had distinguished between temporary and permanent offices in the Church. To the former belonged the apostles, evangelists and prophets, to the latter, pastors and teachers. Though in times of great need God may again raise up apostles and evangelists to lead churches back to the truth, yet, even so, these offices would be of a temporary nature. Calvin saw the authority of pastors who, with teachers, serve the Church permanently, as being limited to their own churches. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:28 he distinguishes between apostles and pastors thus:

> ". . . for the Lord created the apostles, that they might spread the Gospel throughout the whole world, and he did not assign to each of them certain limits or parishes, but would have them, wherever they went, to discharge the office of ambassadors among all nations and languages. In this respect there is a difference between them and pastors, who are, in a manner, tied to their particular churches. For the pastor has not a commission to preach the Gospel over the whole world, but to take care of the church that has been committed to his charge."[16]

Luther's view was not dissimilar:

> "That the apostles entered strange houses and preached was because they had a command and were for this purpose appointed, called and sent, namely that they should preach everywhere, as Christ had said, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature'. After that, however, no one again received such a general apostolic command, but every bishop or pastor has his own particular parish."[17]

In later Calvinistic and Lutheran orthodoxy it became axiomatic that the Great Commission had already been fulfilled because the apostles, it was believed, had already reached the ends of the earth.

Unquestionably the Reformers lacked a proper understanding of mission. Altogether too uncritically they accepted the medieval concept of Christendom, with its territorial view of the visible Church as embracing all the citizenry of a country by virtue of a common (infant) baptism. Furthermore they drew too sharp a distinction between the temporary and permanent offices in the church, which succeeded in diverting their attention from the vitally important difference, so far as the missionary task of the Church is concerned, between localised [*i.e.* pastors and teachers) and peripatetic ministries [*i.e.* apostles with a small "a", travelling teachers (Apollos) and evangelists (Timothy and Titus)].

In 1592 Adrianus Saravia (1531-1613), a Dutch political refugee residing in England, challenged the prevailing orthodoxy. Unfortunately he clouded the issue by advancing his argument for the continuing obligation of the Great Commission within the context of a sustained plea for episcopal church government. He stated what to-day seems obvious, but was by no means so when he wrote:

> "The command to preach the Gospel to the gentiles pertained not only to the age of the apostles, but to all future times to the end of the world."[18]

Theodore Beza (1519-1605) replied (1592) that the obligation did not extend beyond the first century. From the Lutheran side, Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) argued on the basis of Mark 16:20; Romans 10:18 and Colossians 1:23 that the Gospel has been preached everywhere by the apostles, and thus concluded: "Therefore with the apostles this mandate and authority ceased".[19]

From the Calvinist and Lutheran churches occasional voices did question the prevailing view, but seemingly without great success. Gisbertius Voetuis (1589-1676), a Dutch Calvinist theologian, made a distinction between a primary vocation in the apostolic times and a secondary vocation in later times, which had an independent character. Unlike Calvin, he recognised the abiding validity of the missionary mandate of Matthew 28:19 for the generations after the apostles.[20]

Against this theological background we are now in a position to appreciate Carey's reference in his famous *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* . . . (1792) to "an opinion existing in the minds of some, that because the apostles were extraordinary officers and have no proper successors, and because many things which were right for them to do would be utterly unwarrantable for us, therefore it may not be immediately binding on us to execute the commission, though it was so upon them".[21] Just when and how the idea that the Great Commission was of permanent obligation for the Church came to be re-instated in the theological thinking of Calvinistic divines would be difficult to determine without a great deal of research. One suspects that the answer may well lie in the Puritan interest in the latter-day glory, which surely implies the prosecution of mission in all the world. If the goal is the latter-day glory of Christ then the means is mission and since the latter-day glory is world-wide, mission must be universal. John Eliot, as we have seen, viewed his mission to the Massachusetts Indians in the context of the spread of Christ's kingdom to the ends of the earth. The realisation of his hope implied the recognition on the part of the Christian church of her responsibility for world-wide mission.

If the Protestant churches in the British Isles and the American colonies were becoming awakened to their missionary obligation there was also needed *a theological justification or rationale for the office of missionary.* As we have seen, Calvin had argued that only pastors and teachers were permanent offices, and these were tied to local congregations. How then was a missionary, who was sent forth to gather churches by the preaching of the Gospel, to be viewed? Scarcely as an elder since initially, and perhaps for many years to come, he had no flock over which to exercise oversight. Neither Calvin nor John Owen after him had been able to provide a theological rationale for the missionary's task. There was needed, therefore, a re-examination of the Scriptures to see whether or not they allowed for the office of missionary.

This re-examination evidently took place in New England, for when the Rev. Thomas Prince (1687-1758) preached in Boston on December 12, 1773, at the giving of the right hand of fellowship to Parker, Hinsdel and Seccombe, who were being employed by the Scottish Society for Propagatting Christian Knowledge at Edinburgh to preach the Gospel among the Red Indians on the borders of New England, he advanced the following thesis. He argued that in "the primitive Age of Christianity" there were "Two sorts of Officers. 1. The Business of Some was to go forth and Preach the Gospel among the Ignorant, both Jews and Gentiles, to Baptise them upon their embracing it, and Gather them into Churches, to begin the Administration of the other Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and see a suitable number of stated Officers engaged in the Care of them, for their further Edification and Continuance: 2. The Business of the

other sort of Officers was, therefore, to take the stated Charge of the Particular Churches thus gathered and settled.

Of the former sort of Officers were the Apostles, and Evangelists; of the latter were the Bishops, that is, in the plain, ancient sense of the Word, the Overseers or Elders of particular Churches, who were to take the Charge of the Spiritual Part; besides the Deacons, who were to take the Charge of the Secular."[22]

Unlike Calvin, Prince drew a distinction between peripatetic and localised ministries, arguing that since it was impossible for twelve men "to Preach the Gospel and Gather Churches in every Town or City of every Country; therefore both the Necessity of Mankind and the Kingdom of Christ required, that others duly qualified, should be added to them in their great Business of the Propagation of the Gospel among the Nations . . ."[23] These men were known by the name of evangelist, "whose Business was the same with the general part of the Apostles Office; viz. the Evangelising the Jews and Gentiles; the Preaching the Gospel to them, the labouring by all proper means for their Conversion, Gathering Churches among them, and Committing the Care of those gathered Churches to well qualified Overseers or Elders".[24] As examples of evangelists, Prince gives Philip, Timothy and Titus.

Having surveyed the evidence relating to the existence of the office within the New Testament and in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* Prince drew the following conclusions:

(1) Evangelists were not extraordinary officers. "So long as there are Heathens to be Evangelised, to be Converted to the Christian Faith, to be Baptised and gathered into Churches; so long do both the Kingdom of Christ and Necessities of Men require the Office, as well as in the primitive Times . . ."

Indeed, he argued that the lack of the office had impeded the progress of the Gospel in the world, "And the contrary narrow Conception, laying aside those Evangelical Officers and confining the Christian Ministry to the Pastors or Elders of Particular Churches, has not only a plain natural Tendency to hinder; but has also doubtless been a principal Means of hindering the Propagation of the Gospel thro' the World".[25]

(2) Evangelists are more properly the successors of the apostles, in that they are "Preachers of the Gospel and Gatherers of Churches among the Heathen".

(3) Though evangelists ordain elders over the churches they have gathered this no more infers "a Superiority in the Evangelists; than one Stated Bishop of a Church ordaining another Bishop, will infer a Superiority in the Ordainer".[26]

It is evident that such an understanding of the missionary's task and its scriptural foundation helped to free the log-jam in missiology which had existed in the Protestant churches since the time of the Reformation. It made possible the sending forth of a host of ministerially qualified men to the very ends of the earth.

The last element in the theological revolution that helped to send Carey to India must now be examined. It was the *break with hyper-Calvinism*, which had held the Particular Baptist denomination in its icy grip for so long. Hyper-Calvinism cut the nerve of evangelistic preaching by denying that all men were to be called upon to repent and believe in Christ, and throttled missionary endeavour by refusing to allow the use of means towards the end of converting the heathen. However, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century new life was beginning to stir in the ranks of Particular Baptists. The fires of revival were about to melt the ice of hyper-Calvinism. As early as 1770 the Northamptonshire Association's circular letter had said: "Every soul that comes to Christ to be saved from hell and sin by him, is to be encouraged . . . The coming soul need not fear that he is not elected, for none such would be willing to come and submit to Christ".[27] Robert Hall senior (1728-91), preaching before the same Association at College Lane, Northampton, took for his text "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take out the stumbling block out of the way of my people". In response to many requests he published his sermon in 1781, in expanded form, under the title *Help to Zion's Travellers*. In this tract he insisted that "the way to Jesus is graciously laid open for everyone who chooses to come to him". Carey was deeply influenced by it. "I do not remember to have read any book with such raptures", he said later.[28]

The most telling attack on hyper-Calvinism came from the pen of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), pastor of the Soham church in Cambridgeshire, and then of the Baptist church at Kettering. In his book *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation* (1784) he joined issue with all who denied that the invitations of the Gospel were to be addressed to all men. He described the nub of the controversy thus: "The question is not whether unconverted sinners be the object of exhortation; but whether they ought to be exhorted to perform spiritual duties?"[29] He argued convincingly that all men everywhere were under obligation to repent of sin and believe the Gospel. The effect of his book upon Carey was profound, as George Smith, one of Carey's biographers noted: "When Fuller published his treatise, Carey had drawn the practical deduction—'If it be the duty of all men, when the Gospel comes, to believe unto salvation, then it is the duty of those who are entrusted with the Gospel to endeavour to make it known among all nations for the obedience of faith'."[30]

The eschatological hope of the latter-day glory of Christ, when the earth should be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea, the

recovery of a sense of the binding authority of the Great Commission, the realisation that the office of missionary had a permanent validity and the recovery of evangelical Calvinism—these elements made up a profound theological revolution which liberated Reformed churches to pursue a programme of world conquest in the name of the Redeemer. Without such a revolution it is doubtful if William Carey would have gone to India at all.

To be continued

[1] *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol. 4, p. 69.
[2] Stephen Neill: *A History of Christian Missions*, p. 261. [3] *ibid.*, p. 243.
[4] See Sidney H. Rooy: *The Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition* (Delft, 1965); Peter Toon (ed.): *Puritan Eschatology* (London, 1970); Iain Murray: *The Puritan Hope—Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (London, 1971); J. A. De Jong: *As the Waters Cover the Sea—Millennial Expectations in the use of Anglo-American missions*, 1640-1810 (Kampen, 1970). [5] De Jong: *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[6] Quoted Murray: *op. cit.*, p. 92. [7] De Jong: *op. cit.*, p. 75. [8] *ibid.*, p. 75.
[9] *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* in Jonathan Edwards: *Works* (London, 1834) Vol. 2, p. 323. [10] Quoted De Jong: *op. cit.*, p. 128.
[11] Edwards: *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 290. [12] *ibid.*, p. 290.
[13] Quoted De Jong: *op. cit.*, pp. 175-6. [14] De Jong: *op. cit.*, p. 177.
[15] Quoted *ibid.*, p. 177. [16] Quoted Harry R. Boer: *Pentecost and Missions*, p. 19.
[17] Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 19. [18] Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 20. [19] Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 21.
[20] J. Van den Berg: "Calvin and Missions" in Jacob T. Hoogstrin (ed.): *John Calvin—Contemporary Prophet*, p. 173. [21] William Carey: *Enquiry*, p. 8.
[22] Printed in R. Pierce Beaver: *Pioneers in Mission*, p. 67.
[23] *ibid.*, p. 67. [24] *ibid.*, p. 68. [25] *ibid.*, p. 70. [26] *ibid.*, p. 71.
[27] Quoted A. C. Underwood: *A History of English Baptists*, p. 160.
[28] Quoted Underwood: *op. cit.*, p. 161. [29] Quoted Boer: *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4.
[30] George Smith: *Life of William Carey*, p. 48, quoted Boer, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

Radio Broadcasts—F.E.B.A.—Seychelles

During April, services recorded at Cuckfield will be broadcast each Sunday. These are: April 1st—*Early Christian Practice*; April 8th—*The Importance of Good Works*; April 15th—*The Necessity of Christ's Suffering*; April 22nd—*The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*; April 29th—*Felix puts it off!* All are expositions from the book of Acts. Broadcasts commence at 11.30 a.m. Indian Standard Time. (6.00 a.m. G.M.T. or 7.00 a.m. B.S.T.)

Reformed Baptist Camp. For young people aged 14-18. An ideal spot in Mid-Wales. 6th-15th August. Open air activities. Discussion groups. For details write to C. G. Pegington (Secretary), Reformed Baptists Camps, 24 Alandale Drive, Royton, Lancs. OL2 52U.

ABOUT BOOKS

Pastor Berge (see page 15) knows what it is to be hit over the head by the Paris police. You would think they would have eyes to see that he was not one of the hairies! But such is the tension concerning protest and revolution in some places that there is no discrimination. If you are found among the students you cop it whatever your reason for being there. If you do not get Pastor Berge's address *Christianity and Revolution* given at Liverpool by writing to Peter Dixon, 73 Pasture Hill Road, Haywards Heath, why not read *Is Revolution Change?*[1] One of the five essays included is by Fred Catherwood who suggests four reasons for Christian action, one doctrinal, one historical, one practical and one spiritual. Alan Kreider presents one essay which follows the pacifist Anabaptist line.

The New Super-Spirituality by Francis Schaeffer[2] is relevant and racey. He deals primarily with the New Pentecostalism and shows how it differs from the Old. The Old Pentecostals generally maintained a strong emphasis on doctrine. Herein lay their strength. The New Pentecostals look for external signs as a basis for fellowship and acceptance. Schaeffer points out that faith has always been the touchstone and that Bible believing Christians are always required to be faithful in regard to basic truth. Unitarians and Buddhists have external signs which in any case can be counterfeited easily enough by the devil. But the author shows that there have always been forms of super-spirituality. In 1947 there were Dutch dominies who rode with striped trousers on bicycles two inches higher than others. Another new form of superism is seen with the Children of God. Having reacted against the taboos of their bourgeois parents they have now created their own legalistic prison, not being allowed to read books and being circumscribed in their contacts. Even marriages have to have the approval of the elders who have scarcely left school. "Its scary", says Schaeffer.

The Baptist Times is very derogatory about Schaeffer's new book *Genesis in Space and Time*[3] describing it as "silly". The reason: the author believes in the historicity of Adam and the flood! This only whets our appetite! The same paper strongly discourages the reading of *An Introduction to the Baptists*[4]. E. A. Payne laments the fact that the book does not favour the Baptist Union or Michael Taylor and counts the dissenting Russian Baptists among its heroes! The claim is made that the volume is inaccurate but having made a mountain out of this a mouse creeps out! The birth-place of Oncken is disputed!

Children of Abraham, now 104 pages, by David Kingdon at 60 pence is ready as is *The Free Offer*, 24 pages, 18 pence, by the editor. Both are Carey publications.

Some books increase in value with the passing of time and others need to be destroyed. Belonging to the former category we commend again Dr. Lloyd-Jones' *Preaching and Preachers*[5] in which he suggests that preachers are born and not made and that, "all your books such as *The A.B.C. of Preaching*, or *Preaching Made Easy* should be thrown into the fire as soon as possible!" We suggest three that survive the conflagration for the shelf called homiletics, namely, *Lectures to my Students* by C. H. Spurgeon, the above, and *The Christian Ministry* by Charles Bridges[6].

[1] Edited by Brian Griffiths, I.V.P., 110 pages, 30p.
[2] Hodder and Stoughton, 44 pages, 20p. [3] Hodder and Stoughton, £1·00.
[4] Carey, 128 pages, 75p. [5] Hodder and Stoughton, 322 pages, £2·50.
[6] Banner of Truth, 408 pages, £1.25.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE BURLINGTON PRESS, FOXTON, NEAR CAMBRIDGE

NUMBER 14 APRIL-JUNE 1973

Reformation Today is a quarterly magazine published by Cuckfield Baptist Church, Sussex.

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Subscriptions

GREAT BRITAIN	50p per annum
AUSTRALIA	A $ 1.10
U.S.A.	U.S. $ 1.50
CANADA	C $ 1.50
SOUTH AFRICA	R 1.00

Single copies one quarter the above in each case which includes postage.

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